



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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Maryland Oral Cancer Prevention Initiative

Legislation in 2000 resulted in the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Oral Cancer Prevention Initiative. The initiative directed programmatic authority and funding to the Maryland Office of Oral Health to conduct the following activities designed to reduce oral cancer morbidity and mortality in Maryland through: 1) health education and awareness for the public; 2) health care provider education and training in conducting oral cancer examinations; 3) a public relations campaign including creation of an oral cancer prevention toolkit for statewide use; 4) oral cancer screenings for high risk populations; 5) funding for further diagnostic costs (e.g., brush biopsy and/or excisional/incisional biopsy); and 6) evaluation of the logistics and costs for a statewide approach. The Governor proclaimed September 16-22, 2001 'Oral Cancer Awareness Week' (OCAW) which initiated a 2-year public relations campaign to increase awareness among the public of oral cancer prevention. Additionally, OCAW kicked off a more extensive oral cancer prevention and education campaign via grants to local health departments throughout the State. This program is the result of local, state and federal partnerships and depends upon community linkages and resources to conduct statewide interventions. State general funds, requested and garnered by the Office of Oral Health, comprise 100% of the resources for the Oral Cancer Prevention Initiative. Funds are guaranteed for at least 2 years and consist of \$500,000/year for programmatic operations and approximately \$40,000/year for staffing. This initiative will positively impact not only the public regarding their oral cancer understanding and awareness but also healthcare providers with regard to their education and practice. Also, the initiative is being institutionalized and is present in 24 jurisdictions in the state (all except for two counties). The NIDCR has recognized the initiative as the model for their oral cancer prevention RFP issued in 2000 entitled "State Models For Oral Cancer Prevention And Early Detection."

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